

## Moving up

### Volkswagen's new mini car

By Jim Mc Cauley

Volkswagen's latest mini car has just gone on sale in 3-door guise, progressing their small car solution from its similarly sized predecessors, the Lupo and Fox. Keeping prices affordable, the 'up!' is one of a trio from the VAG Group and competes with the same underpinnings in the respective corporate packaging of Skoda and SEAT. All are built at Volkswagen's Bratislava plant in Slovakia. Appearance-wise the car is clearly in the Volkswagen mould with the rectangular



body section, but departs from the current family face to offer a unique front end and clever, if dated rear end treatment, reminiscent of some Japanese models of a decade or so ago.

And while it may not exude the charm of the Fiat 500 or Ford Ka, it is not until you step inside that you realise what dictated the exterior proportions – very good accommodation for a car that packages its all into just 3.5 metres.

Dash layout and interior trim is also refreshing, but a flat bottomed steering wheel normally associated with performance models looks inappropriate.

Driving force in the new model range is a newly developed 3-cylinder one-litre engine outputting either 60 or 70 PS. Test choice was the 60 PS model in 'Move' trim, the middle level of the three available. This engine produces 60 PS at 5000-6000 rpm with maximum torque of 95Nm between 3000-4300 rpm. But what the statistics fail to tell you is just how smooth the engine is which immediately adds to the car's appeal. Performance-wise, the returns are modest – 0-62 mph in 14.4 seconds with the potential to nudge 100 mph, but you are chasing economy in this car with a combined fuel consumption figure of 62.8 mpg.

Travelling 2-up with light luggage, the car delivers beautifully, stepping though the 5-speed manual 'box, while the electro-mechanical power steering provides appropriate weighting and accuracy. It maintains a firm response for road speeds with increased assistance for low speed manoeuvring, taking the effort out of parking.

Suspension is on the firm side, minimising body roll on corners, but the rear end can be easily unsettled on irregular surfaces.

Accommodation-wise, the car is a very good 4-seater, its relatively long wheelbase used to good effect to maximise cabin space. Despite this, boot space still offers a useful 251 litres, made more versatile by its twin-floor arrangement. Cabin storage has a number of useful pockets as well as the glovebox and central storage bin, while integrated coat hooks on the B pillars can be seen from the outside so that they are easily found.



On the safety front, the car has Electronic Stability Program as standard along with an Electronic Differential Lock and Traction Control. Driver and passenger front and combined side airbags are standard as is a warning light system for unfastened front and rear seatbelts. In the EuroNCAP crash tests the car has achieved the maximum 5-star rating.

While the model range opens at £7995, the test vehicle in mid range 'Move' trim is listed at £8970 and comes with air conditioning, electric windows, multi-media input sockets and split folding rear seats. Additional equipment on the test model included pearl effect paint at £450 and the 'Maps and More' infotainment unit at £275 which enhances the audio system and offers Bluetooth phone connection.

With a CO2 emissions of 105 gms/km, the vehicle has an annual VED charge of just £20, while an insurance group of 1E is the lowest available.

Like all Volkswagen vehicles, the 'up!' is covered by a 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty with 1 years' body protection.